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Announcement by the Physico-Mathematical Society of the University of Kasan.

The 22d of October, 1893, will be the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of the famous Russian mathematician, Lobatcheffsky. This "Copernicus of geometry," as Clifford has called him, belongs undoubtedly to that class of investigators who have not only enriched science by the contribution of important facts, but have revolutionized the very fundamental notions of science which their predecessors considered unassailable.

From the time of Euclid no one had doubted the truth of his axioms and postulates; all the efforts of mathematicians in this direction were toward the limiting of these to the fewest number possible. A great number of attempts, for example, were made to derive the last axiom from the others, while its truth was never questioned. Lobatcheffsky was the first to perceive that the question was one to be decided by experiment; he showed clearly that the assumption of this axiom is equivalent to endowing our space with certain qualities which it may or may not have; and finally, he showed the possibility of a more general geometry without making use of this axiom. Although these ideas gained ground slowly, many of the most distinguished geometers of recent times have testified to the great value of Lobatcheffsky's work, and have shown that his geometry of two dimensions is the geometry of a surface of constant negative curvature, while the geometry of three dimensions introduces the new ideas of hyper-space and the curvature of ordinary space.

The scientific value of Lobatcheffsky's researches is scarcely greater than their philosophical importance. On the one hand, they conduct us to a new question as to the properties of space; on the other hand, they throw a new light upon the question of the origin of our geometrical axioms, and for that reason have a great importance in the theory of perception.

It was the good fortune of the Imperial University of Kasan to count Lobatcheffsky as one of its pupils and members. Here he fulfilled the duties of

a professor from 1812 to 1846, and those of Rector from 1827 to 1846. He is dear to this institution, not only on account of his scientific attainments, but also because of his activity as an instructor. The history of his life and works is inseparably bound up with the history of the University of Kasan; it owes to him the construction of its best buildings and the organization of its library.

The Physico-Mathematical Society of the Imperial University of Kasan cannot neglect to call attention to the approaching centennial anniversary of the birth of the great Russian geometer.

With Imperial sanction, the Physico-Mathematical Society addresses itself to the friends of science in all countries, asking them to contribute to a fund which shall bear the name of Lobatcheffsky. According to the contributions, the Society proposes to devote this fund, either to the establishment of a prize for mathematical researches, or to the erection of a bust in the buildings of the University. It is hoped that the subscriptions will be sufficient to accomplish both of these objects.

Subscriptions should be addressed to The Physico-Mathematical Society, Kasan, Russia.

A. WASSILIEFF, *President.*

T. SOUVOROFF, *Vice-President.*